

that has been able to supersede any of those differences because after the debate of this House is over, socially he has been a good pal for a long time. And I have the impression that he is not going to miss debating alternative minimum tax when he is back in New York. His position has been steadfast in this arena on the issue of AMT, and we have really worked hand in glove with one minor difference: I think rather than borrow the money, I think we should pay for it. And at the same time, I must tell you, he has been a good and humorous friend along the way, and we will miss his presence in the House and on the Ways and Means Committee.

Madam Speaker, I urge adoption of the resolution.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, the alternative minimum tax was introduced to the tax code in 1969 to capture a small number of millionaires who had escaped tax liability. Since that laudable beginning, however, the tax has morphed from a millionaire's tax to a middle class tax.

In fact, a failure to pass an alternative minimum tax patch this year will result in millions of additional families being subject to that tax. In my district alone, H.R. 7005 will prevent over 40,000 additional taxpayers from facing the AMT.

Nationally, the alternative minimum tax would, but for this bill, affect over 50 percent of taxpayers with incomes between \$50,000 and \$100,000 this year. This is a tax on nearly every middle class family—and it falls hardest on those raising a family. A 1-year patch is necessary to protect those families.

It is for those reasons that I reluctantly voted in favor of this legislation. However, a piecemeal, year-by-year approach that places the burden on our children's credit cards is insufficient for a challenge of this magnitude. When Congress returns to this issue, I am looking forward to permanently reforming the alternative minimum tax in a way that does not add to our national deficit.

Mr. LEVIN. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of the Alternative Minimum Tax Relief Act.

I do so because this legislation is necessary to protect 25 million middle class families from a tax that was never intended to apply to them, including more than 53,000 families in my district.

But the bill before us will also increase the Federal deficit by more than \$64 billion.

Earlier this year, we passed an AMT patch in a fiscally responsible manner. We paid for it by closing loopholes and improving the fairness of our tax code.

The minority argued that we should just borrow more money, ignoring the ballooning deficit and mounting debt, and the Bush administration's reckless fiscal policies. At no time did we hear the minority oppose our offsets on the merits. At no time did they argue we should not close these loopholes.

They just engaged in absurd ideological arguments and claimed that closing a loophole is a tax increase.

Today we will take this action to protect 25 million taxpayers because it's the necessary thing to do.

Mr. DINGELL. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 7005, legislation that will provide critical tax relief to 25 million middle

class families and provide a solution to the looming Alternative Minimum Tax crisis. Had Congress failed to act, tens of thousands of my constituents in Michigan's 15th Congressional District would have been required to pay the AMT when filing their 2008 tax return. At a time when middle class families are already finding their budgets stretched thin because of rising costs for things like gasoline, groceries, and health care expenses, imposing an increased tax burden would be unconscionable.

The Democratic majority has shown a continuing commitment to responsible fiscal policies, and made numerous efforts to offset the cost of the AMT fix by closing tax loopholes that allow corporate CEOs to receive deferred compensation from offshore companies. Unfortunately, President Bush and the Republican minority have opposed our efforts to find a way to pay for the AMT fix, and have chosen to pass the cost of this bill onto our children and grandchildren rather than require the wealthiest Americans to pay their fair share of taxes.

This is especially disappointing because the expansion of the AMT was an accounting gimmick designed to make the Bush tax cuts for the wealthy more affordable. Since the enactment of those tax cuts, the President has committed us to a war that costs hundreds of billions of dollars every year and the budget deficit has exploded. Despite inheriting balanced budgets, President Bush's irresponsible fiscal policies have caused the national debt to rise to nearly \$9 trillion; three times the size of our debt when President Clinton left office. Clearly, it is time for a change. I look forward to working with a new President next year to find a way to enact a permanent AMT fix, and rewrite our tax laws and put an end to irresponsible Bush fiscal policies.

Mr. SHAYS. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of the passage of the Alternative Minimum Tax patch we are considering today that will prevent the AMT from affecting an additional 20 million taxpayers in 2009. I am pleased that we are considering this legislation now, which should give taxpayers and the Internal Revenue Service plenty of time to prepare for this important tax change.

According to a 2007 study by the Tax Foundation, Connecticut's Fourth Congressional District, which I represent, is the seventh most affected district by the AMT. Over 10 percent of our residents' tax returns are subject to the AMT, and the average tax liability of those affected by it is \$5,235 per return.

I would prefer us to be considering an AMT bill today that is offset by a combination of spending cuts and temporary revenue increases, but I am pleased that we are not considering legislation that pays for a 1-year fix in the process with a permanent revenue increase.

Finally, I urge Congress to take up legislation soon that would fully repeal the AMT permanently. While the revenue loss will need to be made up in other ways, it was never the intent for the AMT to affect 41 million taxpayers, which it could by 2013 if it is not changed.

I thank the Ways and Means Committee for bringing this legislation to the floor and urge its adoption.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 7005, the Alternative Minimum Tax Relief Act of 2008.

H.R. 7005 is critical to easing the burden on middle-class taxpayers. The Alternative Min-

imum Tax, AMT, was originally intended to ensure that the Nation's wealthiest taxpayers were not able to avoid paying taxes altogether. However, it was not indexed for inflation, and today millions of middle income Americans who pay their taxes as required would see a huge tax increase because of the AMT. In my district alone, over 30,000 people would be affected by the AMT this year. H.R. 7005 provides 1 year of AMT relief to protect ordinary taxpayers who are threatened by this extra tax by increasing the amount of income exempt from the Alternative Minimum Tax. In addition, this bill would protect individuals who exercised incentive stock options from being required to pay tax on gains that never materialized. This legislation will protect over 25 million middle-class families from paying the AMT.

I would have preferred that this bill was fully paid for. I supported H.R. 6275, the 1-year AMT patch legislation that the House passed in June of this year. This bill was fully offset and did not add to the deficit. Unfortunately, the Administration and Senate Republicans have continued to ignore fiscal responsibility and have threatened to veto any AMT bill that includes offsets. However, H.R. 7005 is a crucial part of providing tax relief to millions of middle-income Americans and strengthening our lagging economy.

I support H.R. 7005, the Alternative Minimum Tax Relief Act of 2008, and I urge my colleagues to join me in voting for its passage.

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. NEAL) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 7005.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION WAIVING REQUIREMENT OF CLAUSE 6(a) OF RULE XIII WITH RESPECT TO CONSIDERATION OF CERTAIN RESOLUTIONS

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 110-879) on the resolution (H. Res. 1490) waiving a requirement of clause 6(a) of rule XIII with respect to consideration of certain resolutions reported from the Committee on Rules, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS TO SUSPEND THE RULES

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 110-880) on the